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1	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT	
2	DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS	
3		
4	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	
5	vs.) Criminal Action	
6	SHAWN HERRON,) No. 20-10145-FDS	
7	Defendant))	
8)	
9		
10	BEFORE: THE HONORABLE F. DENNIS SAYLOR, IV	
11	DILLE 11 HEADING	
12	RULE 11 HEARING	
13		
14	John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse	
15	Courthouse Way	
16	Boston, MA 02210	
17	October 22, 2021	
18	10:08 a.m.	
19		
20		
21		
22		
23	Valerie A. O'Hara Official Court Reporter	
24	John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse 1 Courthouse Way	
25	Boston, MA 02210 E-mail: vaohara@gmail.com	

APPEARANCES: For The United States: United States Attorney's Office, by EUGENIA M. CARRIS, ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY, 1 Courthouse Way, Suite 9200, Boston, Massachusetts 02210; For the Defendant: Law Office of Bernard Grossberg, by BERNARD GROSSBERG, ESQ., 38 Green Street, Milton, Massachusetts 02185.

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1 PROCEEDINGS THE CLERK: Court is now in session in the matter 2 of United States vs. Shawn Herron, Matter Number 20-10145. 3 Would counsel please identify themselves for the 4 5 record, starting with the government. MS. CARRIS: Good morning, your Honor, Eugenia Carris for the United States. Mr. Dell'Anno 7 apologizes for not being here. He's been required to 8 9 quarantine. 10:08AM 10 THE COURT: All right. Good morning. 11 MR. GROSSBERG: Good morning, your Honor, Bernard Grossberg for Mr. Herron, who is present. 12 13 THE COURT: All right. Good morning. Am I 14 correct that we are here for a change of plea without a 15 plea agreement? 16 MS. CARRIS: That's correct, your Honor. 17 MR. GROSSBERG: Yes, your Honor. 18 THE COURT: Mr. McKillop, would you please swear 19 the defendant. 10:08AM 20 (Defendant was sworn.) THE COURT: Mr. Herron, do you understand that you 21 22 are now under oath and that if you answer any of my 23 questions falsely, your answers may later be used against 24 you in another prosecution for perjury or making a false statement? 25

1	THE DEFENDANT: I do.
2	THE COURT: What is your full name?
3	THE DEFENDANT: Shawn Michael Herron.
4	THE COURT: How old are you?
5	THE DEFENDANT: Forty-six.
6	THE COURT: How far did you go in school?
7	THE DEFENDANT: High school graduate.
8	THE COURT: Are you a citizen of the
9	United States?
10:09AM 10	THE DEFENDANT: I am.
11	THE COURT: Have you been recently treated for or
12	diagnosed with any mental illness or psychiatric or
13	psychological problem of any kind?
14	THE DEFENDANT: No.
15	THE COURT: Have you been recently treated for or
16	diagnosed with any drug addiction or drug problem or
17	alcohol problem of any kind?
18	THE DEFENDANT: No.
19	THE COURT: As you sit here today, are you under
10:09AM 20	the influence of any medication or drug or alcoholic
21	beverage of any kind?
22	THE DEFENDANT: Yes.
23	THE COURT: What is that?
24	THE DEFENDANT: A prescription medication for
25	anxiety, Zoloft and Lamictal.

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                     THE COURT: Does that in any way interfere with
            your ability to think clearly?
       2
                     THE DEFENDANT: It does not.
       3
                     THE COURT: Or your ability to understand what
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            we're here today to do?
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                     THE DEFENDANT: No, your Honor.
                     THE COURT: Mr. Grossberg, are you aware of any
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            reason that we cannot continue?
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       9
                     MR. GROSSBERG: No, your Honor. We discussed
10:10AM 10
            this, and I don't think it impairs his ability to proceed.
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                     THE COURT: Mr. Herron, have you received a copy
            of the indictment pending against you, that is, the written
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      13
            charges made against you in this case?
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                     THE DEFENDANT: Yes.
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                     THE COURT: Have you fully discussed the charges
      16
            against you and the facts and circumstances of your case
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            with Mr. Grossberg as your lawyer?
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                     THE DEFENDANT: I have, yes.
      19
                     THE COURT: Are you fully satisfied with the
10:10AM 20
            counsel and representation and advice given to you in this
            case by your lawyer, Mr. Grossberg?
     21
                     THE DEFENDANT: Yes.
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      23
                     THE COURT: Do you understand that you do not have
            any kind of plea agreement with the United States
      24
            Government?
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I do.

THE DEFENDANT:

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THE COURT: Has anyone made any promise or 2 assurance to you of any kind in an effort to get you to 3 4 plead quilty? 5 THE DEFENDANT: No. 6 THE COURT: Has anyone attempted in any way to force you to plead guilty or to threaten you if you did 7 8 not? 9 THE DEFENDANT: No. 10:10AM 10 THE COURT: Are you pleading guilty of your own free will because you are in fact guilty? 11 12 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 13 THE COURT: Do you understand that the crimes to 14 which you are pleading guilty are felonies? 15 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 16 THE COURT: Do you understand that if I accept your plea, you will be judged guilty of those crimes? 17 18 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 19 THE COURT: Ms. Carris, would you please state the 10:11AM 20 maximum possible penalty provided by law and any applicable 21 mandatory minimum penalty? 22 MS. CARRIS: Your Honor, as to Count 1, which 23 charges conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, a controlled substance, the maximum 24 charge is 20 years' incarceration, five years' supervised 25

release, a \$500,000 fine, forfeiture and restitution to the 1 extent charged in the indictment and a \$100 special 2 3 assessment. 4 As to Count 2, which charges theft of mail by 5 postal employee, the maximum penalties are five years' 6 incarceration, three years of supervised release, a \$250,000 fine and a \$100 special assessment. 7 THE COURT: And are there any live forfeiture 9 issues? 10:11AM 10 MS. CARRIS: There are, your Honor. There is a 11 forfeiture count relating to the drug charge for a \$4,000 12 forfeiture money judgment. 13 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Herron, do you 14 understand that the maximum prison term on Count 1 is 20 15 years? 16 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 17 THE COURT: Do you understand that the maximum prison term on Count 2 is five years? 18 19 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. THE COURT: Do you understand that in addition to 10:12AM 20 21 a prison term, I will have the power to give you a term of 22 supervised release of up to five years on Count 1 and three 23 years on Count 2? 24 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 25 THE COURT: Do you understand that if you violate

the conditions of your supervised release, you could be 1 given additional time in prison? 2 THE DEFENDANT: 3 Yes. THE COURT: Do you understand that the maximum 4 fine on Count 1 is \$500,000 and the maximum fine on Count 2 5 is \$250,000? 6 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 7 THE COURT: Do you understand that by pleading 8 quilty, there may be forfeiture consequences, and you may 9 10:12AM 10 be required to forfeit certain property to the United States? 11 12 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 13 THE COURT: Do you understand that in addition to 14 everything else, you'll be required to pay a \$100 special assessment on each count for a total of \$200? 15 16 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 17 THE COURT: Do you understand all of those possible consequences of pleading quilty, a term of 18 19 imprisonment, a term of supervised release, a fine, a 10:13AM 20 forfeiture and a special assessment? 21 THE DEFENDANT: I do. 22 THE COURT: Do you understand that by being judged 23 quilty, you may lose valuable civil rights, including the right to vote, the right to hold public office, the right 24 25 to serve on a jury and the right to possess a gun?

Yes.

THE DEFENDANT:

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THE COURT: I now want to talk to you about the 2 United States Sentencing Guidelines and how they might 3 affect your sentence. The Sentencing Guidelines have been 4 issued for judges to follow when determining the sentence in a criminal case. 6 They are not mandatory. That means I do not have to follow them, but nonetheless they are important. Have 8 9 you and your lawyer talked about the Sentencing Guidelines 10:13AM 10 and how they might apply to you? 11 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 12 THE COURT: Do you understand that I will not be 13 able to determine your quideline sentence until after 14 probation has prepared a pre-sentence report? 15 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 16 THE COURT: Do you understand that that pre-sentence report will contain information about you and 17 18 your criminal history, if you have one, and the crimes you 19 committed? 10:14AM 20 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 21 THE COURT: Do you understand that the report will 22 also contain a recommended application of the Sentencing 23 Guidelines? THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 24 25 THE COURT: Do you understand that you'll have an

opportunity to read that report and to go over it with your lawyer?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

THE COURT: Do you understand that you'll have an opportunity to object to anything in that report and to challenge any facts reported in it and to challenge the application of the Sentencing Guidelines?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

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THE COURT: Do you understand that under the guideline system, I may have the authority to depart from the guideline sentence and to give you a sentence that's either higher or lower than what they call for?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

THE COURT: Do you understand although I am not required to follow the Sentencing Guidelines, I am required to consider the guidelines before I impose sentence on you?

THE COURT: And do you understand that by law, I'm also required to consider a number of different sentencing factors, including such things as the nature and circumstances of the crime, your personal history and characteristics, and the need for the sentence to reflect the seriousness of the offense, promote respect for the law, provide just punishment, provide adequate deterrence, and protect the public?

1 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. THE COURT: Do you understand that you will not be 2 permitted to withdraw your plea of guilty if your sentence 3 is longer than you expected or you're unhappy with your 4 5 sentence or it's different from any sentence that your lawyer might have predicted? 6 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 7 THE COURT: Do you understand that parole has been 8 abolished and if you are sentenced to prison, you will not 9 10:15AM 10 be released early on parole? 11 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 12 THE COURT: Do you understand that you or the 13 government or both may have the right to appeal any 14 sentence that I impose? 15 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 16 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Herron, do you 17 understand you have the right to plead not quilty to any 18 crime charged against you and to go to trial? 19 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 10:16AM 20 THE COURT: Do you understand you have a right to 21 a trial by jury? 22 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 23 THE COURT: Do you understand that at the trial, 24 you would be presumed innocent, and the government would have to prove your guilt beyond a reasonable doubt? 25

1 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. THE COURT: Do you understand that at the trial, 2 you would have the right to the assistance of counsel for 3 your defense? 4 5 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 6 THE COURT: Do you understand that you would have the right to see and hear all the witnesses against you and 7 to have them cross-examined in your defense? 8 9 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 10:16AM 10 THE COURT: Do you understand that you would have 11 the right to require witnesses to come to court to testify in your defense? 12 1.3 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 14 THE COURT: Do you understand that you would have 15 the right, if you chose to exercise it, to testify in your defense? 16 17 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 18 THE COURT: Do you understand that you would have 19 the right to refuse to testify and to refuse to put on 10:16AM 20 evidence unless you voluntarily elected to do so? 21 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 22 THE COURT: Do you understand that if you decided 23 not to testify or not to put on any evidence, those facts 24 could not be used against you? 25 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

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THE COURT: Do you understand that by pleading guilty here today, if I accept your plea, there will be no trial, and you'll have waived your right to a trial?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

THE COURT: Ms. Carris, would you please summarize the charges against the defendant describing the essential elements of each offense charged?

MS. CARRIS: Your Honor, in Count 1, the defendant is charged with a violation of 21, United States Code, Section 846, conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute cocaine.

The elements there are that the government must prove an agreement that is specified in the indictment, not some other agreement or agreements that existed between at least two people to possess with the intent to distribute cocaine, that the defendant willfully joined in that agreement, and that one of the conspirators committed an overt act during the period of the conspiracy in an effort to further the purpose of the conspiracy.

In addition, your Honor, the government would have to prove that cocaine is a Scheduled II controlled substance, which is defined in Title 21, United States Code, Section 841.

Excuse me, as to Count 2, I forgot there was a Count 2, the defendant is charged in violation of 18

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United States Code, Section 1709, which is theft of mail by postal employee.

There, the government would have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant was employed by the United States Postal Service at the time of the offense, that while working as a postal employee, the defendant had possession of a letter package bag and that the defendant stole or wrongfully removed any article or thing contained in that letter package bag or mail knowing it belonged to someone else.

THE COURT: All right. Mr. Herron, do you understand what the government would have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt in order for you to be found guilty at the trial as to each of those charges?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

THE COURT: Ms. Carris, would you please state the factual basis for the plea, that is, what the government would be prepared to prove if this case were to go to trial?

MS. CARRIS: Your Honor, at trial, the government would present evidence in the form of witness testimony as well as records from the United States Postal Service and Mr. Herron's cellular telephone that would have shown that from approximately September, 2018 through the time of his arrest on the criminal complaint underlying this matter in

February of 2020 that the defendant profiled priority mail parcels primarily from Puerto Rico but also from certain states in the west coast of the United States, removed them from the United States mail stream, took them to his personal office space or elsewhere within the postal office at Fall River and stole their contents if they contained narcotics.

Now, your Honor, for the period of time that I just outlined, Mr. Herron was the manager of the Fall River Post Office, and the government's case would begin with a priority mail parcel that was received in Fall River in September of 2019.

That case, that parcel, your Honor, was found by the postmaster of the Fall River Post Office in Mr. Herron's office closet.

The evidence would show that the parcel had been processed at the U.S. postal facility in Providence, but it was never scanned as arrived on unit in Fall River. This, your Honor, would be part of the scheme of how Mr. Herron stole a number of packages, that is, before they were scanned in as arrival on unit in Fall River, he would remove them from the mail stream and steal their contents.

Upon finding this package, the postmaster alerted agents, and, thus, the investigation began.

There are several other packages of concern, too,

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in October of 2019 that were from California that were never delivered to their intended recipient. When the customer called Mr. Herron in his role as manager of Fall River, Mr. Herron told them that those packages had actually been put back in to be sent back to him, however, that wasn't true.

Scanning records revealed that the parcels arrived in Fall River and then disappeared. There were also several packages, your Honor, that the defendant stole that he believed contained marijuana. We have text messages that I will outline in a moment that show that he attempted to sell these packages totaling what he thought was 80 pounds of marijuana but what turned out to be hemp, which is a legal substance, to individuals associated with his brother.

In November, 2019 specifically, your Honor, and this is the package referencing Count 2 of the indictment on or about November 27th, 2019, the postmaster discovered another priority mail package on Mr. Herron's desk.

This package also had been processed in Providence but never scanned in as having arrived at Fall River.

Investigators were called and saw that the package had been opened and tampered with and was empty.

Agents also installed, your Honor, covert cameras in the public areas of the Fall River Post Office, and

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there is evidence of Mr. Herron inappropriately handling packages from that time through his arrest in February.

Now, as the Court may recall from the motion to suppress hearing, Mr. Herron confessed to this scheme prior to his arrest in February, and his confession confirms what agents had determined through the course of the investigation, that is, that he had targeted packages, he indicated that he stole at least 15 packages from the mail over the course of the conspiracy, and he did so at the urging of his brother, who was working with an individual known to the defendant and his brother as having been someone who distributes drugs in and around the Brockton area.

Mr. Herron would be instructed which packages to target, mostly, as I said, from Puerto Rico but some from states, including California and Oregon, and specifically, your Honor, he had been told to target packages containing cocaine.

Now, going to back to the November 27th package, your Honor, Mr. Herron agreed and agents downloaded the contents of his cell phone and text messages soon after the November 27th incident confirm that Mr. Herron had taken what he believed to be cocaine out of the package to sell to an individual by the name of Bill, who was his brother's drug contact.

1 And I want to just summarize some of the text messages between the defendant and his brother from that 2 time period, specifically texts from November 29th and 3 4 November 30th of 2019. 5 Mr. Herron says, "Do you open it? Did you open it?" 6 His brother replies, "It's wrapped really good." 7 Mr. Herron says, "Should be a full one, I hope." 8 His brother replies, "It's not a full one I don't 9 think." 10:25AM 10 11 Mr. Herron says, "Are you going with him to find 12 out?" 13 His brother says, "He will Facetime me." 14 A little while later, his brother says, "It was 15 271, and he said it's not the best, he will give you four." 16 Mr. Herron says, "Four for half a key? Is he 17 fucking kidding me?" 18 His brother says, "It's less than a half. I told 19 him more. He said I can pick it up." 10:25AM 20 Mr. Herron says, "He needs to give me five, at 21 least, but if he's stuck on four, I'll take it, and he can fuck off. I don't believe for one second that it was only 22 23 271 grams. He just lost a ton of money, boy. He should be going 50-50 with me. That's 13K worth of shit. It's at 24 least five, or he gets nothing." 25

His brother replies, "He says he's not low balling 1 you, he's going by how it's mixed. Your call. My other 2 boy isn't back until Wednesday. He's watching his son's 3 college ball this week." 4 5 Mr. Herron replies, "I'll take the four and he can go fuck himself, no more for him. What time is this cheap 6 low-balling prick giving you the money today?" 7 His brother replies, "He says this morning." This 9 is the following day. Mr. Herron says, "Okay, perfect. Can you meet me 10:26AM 10 at Home Depot? I'm at Brockton. I'm Crescent Street." 11 Your Honor this 4,000 is the basis of the 12 13 forfeiture that is in the indictment. 14 I would note that there would be testimony that 15 cocaine is a Scheduled II controlled substance, and that, 16 as I said, Mr. Herron -- and that there would also be testimony that "kilogram" or "key" is in reference to 17 drugs. The agent would testify that the pricing appears to 18 19 be cocaine and not fentanyl or heroin, which might also be 10:27AM 20 measured in grams. 21 With regard to the text messages that reference 22 the fake marijuana, those are between November 16, 2019 and 23 December 1, 2019, again, between Mr. Herron and his

Mr. Herron begins, "He's pulling some BS, it's 35

brother.

24

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or fuck Jim and his bullshit. He's had it for hours. 1 35 and not a penny lower. 35 for 80P is a steal." 2 Then later, he says, "Tell him 28 for all. 3 what he's willing to pay, maybe 400 each for 32." That is 4 per pound, your Honor. "When we going to know? I have big plans for that 6 money, and he backed out. He's going to make more than 350 7 per pound if he'd just write it up, I'd say. I'd want to 8 get a hit run for my back room and new windows and a tile 9 10:28AM 10 floor back there. Would he be willing to take it at 24K? That's the lowest I'd say I'd go. That's 300 each." 11 12 Later on, Mr. Herron continues, "Bring them over. 13 I haven't seen them in a long time. Even if I get 12 to 14 15K, I could care less." 15 "FYI, that stuff is not home grown, it's from a 16 farm in Oregon. That's what the fake paperwork is. They 17 use the fake paperwork to make it look legit." 18 His brother says, "I have it, but there's like no 19 crystals on it. I will get it, but just so you know, it's 10:28AM 20 CBS, not weed." 21 Mr. Herron says, "What is CBS? He says, "CBD, it's imitation weed." 22 23 I think that covers it, your Honor. 24 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Herron, do you 25 disagree with anything in the government's description of

the facts? 1 THE DEFENDANT: 2 THE COURT: All right. I will take the change of 3 4 plea. 5 THE CLERK: Mr. Herron, please stand. Count 1 of 6 the indictment charges you with conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute controlled 7 substance in violation of Title 21, United States Code, 8 9 Section 846. 10:29AM 10 How do you now wish to plead, quilty or not 11 quilty? 12 THE DEFENDANT: Guilty. 13 THE CLERK: Count 2 of the indictment charges you 14 with theft of mail by postal employee in violation of 15 Title 18, United States Code, Section 1709. How do you now 16 wish to plead, guilty or not guilty? 17 THE DEFENDANT: Guilty. 18 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may be seated. 19 THE COURT: It is the finding of the Court in the 10:29AM 20 case of United States vs. Shawn Herron that the defendant 21 is fully competent and capable of entering an informed plea, that the defendant is aware of the nature of the 22 23 charges and the consequences of the plea, and that the plea of quilty is a knowing and voluntarily plea supported by an 24 25 independent basis in fact containing each of the essential

elements of the offenses charged.

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The plea is therefore accepted, and the defendant is now adjudged guilty of those offenses.

Mr. Herron, as I've told you, a written pre-sentence report will be prepared by probation to assist me in determining your sentence. You'll be asked to give information for that report. Your lawyer may be present, if you wish. It's important that the report be accurate. It will not only affect what sentence you receive but what happens to you after you are sentenced. For example, if you are sent to prison, it will affect where you are sent and what happens to you when you arrive.

Even minor mistakes in the report should be corrected. You'll have a chance to read that report and to go over it with your lawyer and to make objections to it before the time of sentencing.

Both your lawyer and you personally will have the opportunity to speak on your behalf at the time of sentencing. I will therefore refer you to probation for the presentence investigation and the preparation of the report.

Before the pandemic that process usually took about 12 weeks to complete. It's taking a little longer now.

Matt, do you have a date?

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                     THE CLERK: Thursday, February 17th at 2 p.m.
                     THE COURT: Thursday, February 17th at 2 p.m.
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            Does that work, Ms. Carris?
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                     MS. CARRIS: It does, your Honor, thank you.
                     THE COURT: Mr. Grossberg.
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                     MR. GROSSBERG: Yes, your Honor.
                     THE COURT: All right. And what was the
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            government's position on release pending sentencing?
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                     MS. CARRIS: Your Honor, Mr. Grossberg and I have
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            discussed, and we do not object to Mr. Herron staying out
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            on the conditions that have been previously set.
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                     THE COURT: All right. Is this something where I
      13
            need to find exceptional circumstances?
     14
                     MS. CARRIS: It is, your Honor.
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                     THE COURT: I find under the statute, is it 3145?
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                     MS. CARRIS: I'm sorry, I don't know the statute
            off the top of my head, your Honor.
     17
      18
                     THE COURT: All right. I find under 18 U.S.C.,
      19
            Section 3145(c) that it's been clearly shown that there are
10:32AM 20
            exceptional reasons why detention pending imposition of the
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            sentence would not be appropriate, and the government has
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            assented to release.
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                     Mr. Herron, I'm going to release you on the same
            conditions that you've been under so far. Whatever
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            obligations, requirements, restrictions you have are going
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            to continue. Do you understand that?
                     THE DEFENDANT: Yes.
       2
                     THE COURT: The only thing that's changed is
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            you're no longer presumed innocent, you've now pleaded
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       5
            quilty, and if something goes wrong or if you violate your
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            conditions, that will be taken into account. Do you
       7
            understand that?
                     THE DEFENDANT: I do.
       8
                     THE COURT: Do you believe you understand the
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            conditions of your release?
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                     THE DEFENDANT: I do.
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                     THE COURT: Do you have any questions for me about
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            them?
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                     THE DEFENDANT: No, sir.
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                     THE COURT: I will order, as I said, release on
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            the same conditions pending imposition of the sentence.
            there anything further, Ms. Carris?
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     18
                     MS. CARRIS: No, your Honor, thank you.
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                     THE COURT: Mr. Grossberg.
10:33AM 20
                     MR. GROSSBERG: No, your Honor.
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                     THE COURT: Thank you. We'll stand in recess.
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                     THE CLERK: All rise.
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                     (Whereupon, the hearing was adjourned at
            10:33 a.m.)
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